

*Further Notes on the Bhojpuri dialects spoken in Saran.* (Vide *Journal A. S. B. Part I, No. 3, Pages 192—212 of 1897*).—By GIRINDRANATH DUTT.

[Read January, 1904.]

When my notes on the Saran dialects appeared in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part I, No. 3 of 1897, I was called upon by Dr. Grierson, in charge of the Linguistic Survey of India, through the Collector of Saran, to furnish him with further information regarding the Bhojpuri dialect spoken in Saran. Vicissitude of fortune had so long prevented me from forwarding to the Society a copy of the Notes I had submitted to him, and this I now do in a revised form, with a hope that they will be as interesting as my former notes.

The Bhojpuri dialect spoken in Saran is not the strict Bhojpuri *boli* prevalent in Arrah, as I have shewn in my previous report. It bears close affinity to the dialect spoken on the Northern part of District Shahabad bordering the Saraju and the Ganges. The whole population of Saran may be said to speak this dialect with slight changes in different Pergannas which border another district. Thus the Bhojpuri dialect forms the principal dialect of the district, and the various dialects which have been influenced by the dialects prevailing in the conterminous districts have been rightly classified by Dr. Grierson in his Linguistic Survey Report as sub-dialects under it. Natural barriers such as seas, rivers, mountains and deserts prove a very strong impediment on the way of languages or dialects travelling from one country to another. "Language," says Mr. Sayce, "is the test of social contact, not of race," and these barriers prove an almost unsurmountable obstacle to social contact. People of one district will gladly prefer to undertake a matrimonial expedition 30 miles off in the same district but will not hazard a match just on the other bank of the river and nearer home in another District except in the rare instance that it is a *marriage de convenance* fetching a large dower or some prospective hopes. But yet there is much of social contact to coat their tongue. They cultivate land, carry on trade on the other

bank of the river in another district, and in their import cargo bring home a contraband dialect which is only detected when they come in contact with the people of other Pergannas. Hence the origin of these sub-dialects.

Now for the origin of the Bhojpuri dialect. According to the universal rule that all languages have their nomenclatures from some distinct place or person they owe their origin to, the term Bhojpuri has come from Bhojpur, the town or Capital of Raja Bhoja. This Bhojpur Yule conjectures to be 'Stagabaza' of Ptolemy which he says was a site of extreme antiquity on the upper stream of Betwa, where are remains of vast hydraulic works ascribed to a king Bhoja (M'Crindle's *Ancient India by Ptolemy* p. 163). But who is this king Bhoja? We have got in ancient Indian History "more than a dozen princes known to us who have at different times borne that illustrious name" from the days of R̥g. Veda Samhitā to the 11th Century A.D. (*Vide* Raja Rajendra Lal's *Indo-Aryans* Vol. II, p. 385).

Mr. Cosserat found in Saran a copper-plate inscription wherein the names of the rulers of Kanauj are mentioned, and two names of Bhoja<sup>1</sup> occur in it in the same dynasty. Of this General Cunningham observed: "Now at this very time we know that a Raja Bhoja Deva was paramount sovereign at Gwalior, as his inscription, carved on the rock itself, is dated in Samvat 933 or A.D. 876. From the Rājatarāṅginī also we learn that a Raja Bhoja contended with Śaṅkaravarman of Kaśmīr, who reigned between the years 883-901 A.D. I am quite satisfied that all these records refer to the same prince Bhoja Deva, who was Raja of Kanauj during the last quarter of the 9th century or from about A.D. 875 to 900." Raja Rajendra Lal Mittra comments thereon thus:—

"The identification makes the prince named in the Pehewa, the Gwalior, the Saran and the Benares records to be the same with that of Kanauj noticed in the Rājatarāṅginī, and I accept it as obviously correct" (*Indo-Aryans*, p. 394). The dynasty to which these two Bhojas belonged reigned in Kanauj for a long time, and it was not known when it began. So much is known that it was overthrown in the reign of the last Bhoja by the invasion of Kalacuri or Cedi dynasty from the South and the Pālas from the East. The Cedis conquered Kanauj and the Pālas Benares. It is just probable that the Kingdom of Kanauj then extended as far as Benares, and that the last King Bhoja, ousted from Kanauj, founded a kingdom in Shahabad, with Bhojpur as its Capital, by conquering the aboriginal tribes of the Kharwar race.

<sup>1</sup> The Deogarh inscription of King Bhoja Deva of Kanauj is dated Saka Samvat 784-862 A.D. (*Vide* Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions* Introduction, p. 107).



There are scattered over throughout the length and breadth of Saran District ruins which the villagers point out as belonging to the time of the Chero Rajas. These Cheros I have noticed were aboriginal tribes whom perhaps the Rajputs of Kanauj had overthrown. Kanauj was a seat of civilisation in days of yore, and its Brahmins colonised and civilised an extensive tract of Upper India, *viz.*—Guzrat, Bundelkhand, Rohilkhand, Gwalior, North Bihar and Bengal. The Sarajupari Brahmins so abundant in Gorakhpur, Saran and Champaran belong to the Kanaujia Branch, and seem to have come with their king and colonised these parts.

Now the present Bhojpuri dialect which is spoken in Gorakhpur (and, may be, further up to Rai-Bareilly), Saran, Shahabad and a portion of Champaran, is no doubt a mixture of the Kanaujia and the Magadhi dialects. These small bodies of invaders found after settling at Bhojpur a very ancient and powerful dialect, the Magadhi, predominant in the conterminous district, and they gradually adopted its vocabulary. "This is a general rule," says Mr. Sayce, "that whenever two nations equally advanced in civilisation are brought into close contact, the language of the most numerous will prevail." Such is the origin of the Bhojpuri dialect. A glance at the translation of the Parable of the Prodigal son into the Kanaujia dialect, given in Dr. Grierson's Book of Specimens, will show how the vocabulary and idioms of this dialect are yet intact in the Bhojpuri dialect. I would invite special attention to the words *पनहि ज्योनार* and *लडरे* which are found in no other dialects of Bihar except Bhojpuri.

I now invite special attention to the peculiar dialect spoken in the Ceranel and Kacmar Pergannas in the Saran District, which is an admixture of the Magadhi dialect (*मगाह का वोलि*).

The southern and the eastern parts of District Saran, *i.e.*, the Gogra-Gangetic Valley and the Gandak Valley, present such an admirably striking contrast that it seems as if nature has equipoised her gifts of good and evil to this district. The Southern Valley bears an excellent healthy climate; its soil is far more fertile than that of any part of the district, its banks are stud with places of bustling trade and commerce, and it is inhabited by whatever classes of sturdy cultivators, traders and men of intelligence and education the district can boast of. The B. and N.-W. Railway line which intersects this tract, and may verily be said to have thereby classified, as it were, the intelligent and indolent portion of the population, has added an impetus to civilisation which "the fair Saraju's fertile sides" have been enjoying since the days of Valmiki and Kalidasa. The Gandak Valley exhibits quite a diametrically opposite picture. The sandy sediments, which

the annual inundation of the river carries with it, add little to the fertility of the soil; the banks of the river contain dens of thieves, dacoits, pirates or temporary straw-huts of cultivators forming straggling villages which are abandoned as soon as the flood arrives. The climate is very unhealthy, and the well-water has a peculiar property of producing goitre; whilst the river-water is from time immemorial notorious for generating this disease. In the famine of 1896-97, when I had to make a regular reconnoitre of this part, I was shocked at the horrible picture of human calamity, much like Ezekiel's denouncement against the ancient Egyptians, with which Providence has cursed the people of the part marked in the census map as circle 6 to 10, where more than 75 per cent. of the villagers have large protruding goitres and hardly a single family which has not at least one of its members, a consummate idiot, deaf and dumb both, whom they call *Bauk* in their vernacular. Not much trade is carried on by the river, and there is scarcely a single Bazar worth the name on its bank. This deplorably backward state of the tract is, it seems, as ancient as civilisation is in the other tract. Mr. F. E. Pargiter in his identification of the Kingdom of Videha places this tract as forming the Western portion of its territory, and quoting the story of Māthava in the Śatapātha Brāhmaṇa in support describes it thus: "The Gandak flows through the middle of the country; it has always been liable to shift its course greatly; its numerous channels intersect the country, and its floods would have rendered the soil extremely marshy." "A further consideration of these facts, will, I think, throw some light on this passage from Śatapātha Br. Videha in ancient times, like most other parts of India, has been more or less covered by forest, the remains of which survive at the present day along the foot of the Himalayas in the tract called Tarai, and was no doubt inhabited by aboriginal tribes such as inhabit the Tarai now. The deadly malaria of such a forest is well-known, and only aboriginal tribes have been able to live in its climate. To this must be added the effect, which the periodic floods from the Gandak during the rainy season must have produced in the rank vegetation of such a region. Very swampy and uncultivable would be the moderate expressions to apply to it. No *Ārya* could have ventured within it, and the only way in which *Āryas* could have colonised it was by filling and burning the forest down wholesale, and opening out the soil to the purifying rays of the sun. That is what (it seems to be implied) Māthava must have done" (Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. LXVI, Part I, No. 2, 1897).

Such being the case, the glotological principles of Phonetic decay and emphasis are prolific in this busy southern part of Gogra-Gangetic



Valley, and as we gently glide down from the south-west corner of the district to the south-east, touching the different places of trade and commerce till we reach Patna, the centre and fountain-head of all trade, we observe how, as a natural sequence, words are gradually clipped and shortened to suit “rapid speaking and the common desire to save time and trouble” which characterises the trading class.

To illustrate this I would refer to my previous paper, Diagram C, p. 204, of Journal No. 3 of 1897. The people of Andor, Caubar, Narhan, Manjhi, and Bāl will say *हम गांवे जानानि* or *जातवानि*, which the people of Ballia District will change into *हम गांवे जातवाटिं*; the people of Cirand and Kacmar will shorten it into *हम गांवे जातहंई*, which again the people of Patna will further slice into *हम तांव जानाहें*. The dialect too looks as if it is an article of trade, each trading-place husking the chaff, and making it more refined.

But these principles of Phonetic decay and emphasis have little sphere of action in the dull and stagnant population of the Gandak Valley and the great bulk lying north of the Railway line. Excepting Mirganj Bazar, situated 12 miles north of the Railway line, there is hardly any considerable mart in this extensive region of Doldrum (which forms about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the district) notwithstanding the fact that Saran is an importing district and its over-population maintained chiefly on imports even in the very best season. Education here is at a discount that I am tempted to quote here a passage from my official report on the Famine operation of 1896-97:—

“My grain officers experience considerable difficulties in getting a single scribe out of a dozen villages containing several hundred inhabitants who could endorse a signature in the documents on behalf of the illiterate mass gathered round the camp for the *takkavi* grain; if, perchance, one was caught hold of, every letter had to be dictated to him over and over before he could scribble in his unintelligible alphabets of an Egyptian obelisk or one of those Runic inscriptions which are said to exist in the deserts of Tartary.”

We therefore observe in this tract (excepting the small trans-khanna tract) an uniform monotony in the dialect, slightly broken only at the verge of other conterminous districts, the vocabulary of which has been imported to some extent. There is hardly any observable dialectical difference in the main portion of the Perganahs of Kuadi, Sipah, Paclak, Dangsi, Bara, Barai, Madhal, etc. Nothing is in their dialect to distinguish a man of one Perganah from the other, if he does not live on the border of any other district.

